



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 17, 2015

Senator Gary Winfield, Co-Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Representative Peter Tercyak, Co-Chair Labor & Public Employees Committee
Senator Tony Hwang, Ranking Member Labor & Public Employees Committee
Representative David Rutigliano, Ranking Member Labor & Public Employees Committee

Members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee,

**Proposed House Bill #5871 -- AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL**

My name is Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association. Our Association represents more than 26,000 paid and volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. I would like to comment on the subject bill on the agenda for today's public hearing.

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association would like to ask for your support for this bill. In the 1960's when cities were in social strife, residents were asked who they called when they were in trouble. They said they would pull the red box on the corner. The firefighters will always come.

Anywhere, anytime when citizens have any type of an emergency and don't know who to call, they call the fire department. If the firefighters don't know what to do, they will figure it out somehow. They always know what to do. And firefighters have been doing that since Ben Franklin organized the first fire department.

Now the firefighters need your help. They keep responding to your emergencies, but times have changed. Consumer goods used to be manufactured from simple materials. Now these same items contain exotic materials which, when they burn, give off toxic chemicals in the smoke. These chemicals identified are proven to contain products that are carcinogenic to humans; including Benzene, Arsenic, Butadiene, Formaldehyde, chromium compounds, dioxins, asbestos, among others.

We call on firefighters to mitigate emergencies with these known carcinogens and then we refuse to provide them with workers' compensation benefits when they become ill. Firefighters are more likely to develop cancer at an earlier age than the general public. This initiative attempts to eliminate false claims by providing for annual physical exams in order to diagnose problems earlier.

Firefighters are not asking for something for nothing. All they are asking is that IF they get sick, and IF it is job related, give them the benefits they deserve. We would ask that you pass this legislation to provide proper workers' compensation coverage that reflects on the issues that Connecticut's firefighters face in their workplace.

Respectfully,

Ted Schroll Jr.

Ted Schroll Jr., Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association

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